

# **Operational Guide**

## **Volunteer Management**



AMERICAN HUMANE

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## Introduction

Volunteers can be a vital source of extra help to most animal care agencies. While counter considerations do exist, most believe that volunteers overwhelmingly increase an agency's available resources, as well as improve its success in the following ways:

- Volunteers provide a rich and available outreach into the community. In most cases, they also offer the same perspective as your general audience, so they can provide insights into how the community perceives your organization. Volunteers also motivate others to get involved. People who are excited about volunteering for you can potentially drive recruitment efforts necessary to grow your volunteer program.
- Volunteers, while often lacking in basic training, can help in certain tasks, such as feeding, foster care, cleaning, exercising, socialization, and special events.
- Volunteers can provide professional services such as website development, marketing, graphic design, desktop publishing, landscaping, grooming, or other expertise.
- Volunteers cultivate relationships with sponsors of in-kind gifts, as well as advance your constituent base. Volunteers almost always become and/or introduce new donors to your organization.
- Volunteers provide free, positive, word-of-mouth advertising for your agency. Even better, they become important and informed allies if you find yourself in a tough public relations situation.

- Volunteers enhance services that your organization provides by boosting staff-to-client ratios and providing resources that might otherwise be outside the fiscal reach of an organization.
- Volunteers improve staff morale by providing much-needed support, which may increase employee retention.

Ideally, staff “buys into” the idea of a robust volunteer program. Agency leaders can facilitate this by giving staff information about what volunteers can and will do for your organization. Including staff in the planning process helps as well. In fact, it is important for all staff to be conversant in the agency's policies so that they are prepared to help a volunteer in any situation.

Properly managed volunteers can be an invaluable asset to any nonprofit organization, but do not make a reckless decision in welcoming them into an agency. Especially in the emotionally super-charged environment found in an animal shelter, it is important to approach a volunteer program with due diligence.

Conflict is inherent in any organization, and animal sheltering is certainly no exception. Indeed, staff often hotly debates volatile topics like euthanasia and temperament testing. Add a volunteer into the mix, and it might fuel conflict because the volunteer may have very little understanding of the challenges faced each day by animal care agencies.

This guide to volunteer management is designed to help you develop and maintain an effective, new volunteer program or evaluate and optimize an existing

volunteer program in your animal care agency. The goal is to identify potential causes of conflict within your agency and determine in advance how best to handle/resolve the conflict when it arises.

## **Volunteer Manager**

Volunteer management offers many rewards to those who believe in the power of volunteerism. Across the country, agencies document millions of volunteer hours annually to promote their missions and goals. A volunteer manager is the leader, coordinator, director, or anyone who assumes responsibility for the development and maintenance of a volunteer program. Simply put, a volunteer manager matches the skills of the people in the volunteer pool with the needs of the agency and facilitates effective communication between the volunteers, staff, and organizational leadership so that work gets done quickly and efficiently.

### **Responsibilities**

The volunteer manager's responsibilities include:

- Attracting people from all segments of the community population to volunteer positions
- Offering volunteers important, meaningful, and satisfying work that matches their interests, skills, talents, and time availability
- Streamlining positions as necessary to accommodate volunteers
- Orienting volunteers to animal protection; the organization's mission and their contribution to that mission
- Giving volunteers clear, understandable position assignments and reporting methods

- Providing training commensurate with the task to be done and volunteer's knowledge and talents
- Fostering trust and cooperation between volunteers and employees
- Establishing a climate that encourages volunteer satisfaction, self-motivation, and (when applicable) significant duration of service
- Providing a system for supplying productive and ongoing feedback to volunteers on their performance
- Valuing and recognizing the contribution of each volunteer
- Evaluating and improving the program continually

A primary function of the volunteer manager is to motivate and set expectations for colleagues who will contribute to the overall success of a volunteer program. The volunteer manager must convey the following points to employees and volunteers:

- How to implement the agency's conflict resolution plan
- Who recognizes volunteer efforts
- Who alerts volunteers to modifications of practices
- Who informs volunteers in disaster situations and agency closures, such as holidays or during an emergency

In order to be effective, volunteer managers must know:

- What is expected of them
- What is expected of the volunteer program
- What are the volunteer program's priorities
- Who makes the final decisions
- What is the budget



- How agency decision making impacts the program

While larger agencies may have a full-time volunteer manager, others assign someone to manage volunteers in addition to other existing job responsibilities. It is not uncommon, for example, for the volunteer manager to double as the public relations, marketing, humane education, or foster care manager. In these cases, communication with colleagues is essential to help them understand the additional workload of overseeing the agency's volunteer program. Frequent communication with other team members builds collaborative long-term relationships that ultimately support the agency's volunteer program. This helps when delegating volunteer responsibilities throughout departments.

The volunteer manager should develop systems that motivate colleagues to embrace volunteers in their departments. Use opportunities such as all-staff meetings or e-mail distribution lists to briefly and frequently celebrate progress in or accomplishments of an agency's volunteer program. In addition, provide training for all staff who participate in the ongoing recruitment and coordination of volunteers, and recognize efforts made by staff that advances the volunteer program.

### ***Tips on Working With Volunteers***

- Create a culture that embraces volunteerism in your organization.
- Write volunteer service descriptions that are clear, specific, and include the desired outcome of the volunteer position.
- Help them understand where they "fit" in the overall picture.
- Train them to do their volunteer service.
- Treat them fairly and with respect.
- Be open with them about problems and challenges.
- Acknowledge (praise) a job well done.
- Don't offer praise when it is not deserved.
- Utilize their gifts, but don't "use" them.
- Don't make unrealistic demands on their time or resources.
- Reimburse them promptly for approved expenses they incur.
- Be clear about time demands and honor them.
- If volunteers are not able to perform the volunteer service they signed up for, even with assistance and offers of help, ask them to explain the challenges they face. Listen for reasons why tasks are not completed and offer solutions. If unable to resolve the issue, it may be time to reassign them to another volunteer position or relinquish them from their volunteer service.
- Get to know each volunteer on a personal basis and show an interest in each as a unique individual.
- Evaluate, with their input, their volunteer service; never evaluate them personally.
- Try to place them in a volunteer position where they can use their natural talents or experiences, so that they will be successful.
- Celebrate their success.
- Call them by name.
- Never talk down to volunteers; treat them as professionals.
- Respect their demands when reasonable, and be as accommodating as possible.
- Encourage humor and fun.

- Accept each volunteer's different motivations.
- Empower them to achieve maximum success.
- Seek and use their feedback to improve the program.

## **Planning a Volunteer Program**

The key to a successful volunteer program is planning:

### **Program Objectives**

- Outline how volunteers contribute to the advancement and success of your agency's mission.
- Create measurable objectives (what, how, by whom, when).
- Set clear timeframes in which to complete processes.
- Designate an individual to champion each aspect of the plan, creating accountability for the process.
- Prioritize steps based on ease of completion (confidence boosters that create reasons to celebrate success), need, and availability of resources, whether they be financial or time-oriented.

### **Budget**

Be clear about finances available to support recruitment, training (including materials and uniform), and recognition.

### **Long-Range Strategies**

Decide how volunteers integrate into strategic planning to satisfy visionary targets set forth by your agency's Board of Directors and administrative team. Long-range plans usually encompass a three- to five-year period.

## **Leadership**

Define roles of staff involved with managing volunteers, and if possible, identify volunteers that can assume leadership roles to support your volunteer program.

## **Needs Assessment**

Find your starting point for developing a volunteer program plan by exploring, both with staff and with the community your organization serves, services that would enhance the function of your organization. Do this by either speaking directly with people or using a written survey.

Needs analysis is the systematic process of identifying the difference between what services your agency currently provides and what services you would like to provide, then finding ways to bridge that gap. Because the needs of a community or organization constantly change, if you have not done a similar needs analysis in the last two or three years, take the time to update and do a new analysis before setting up or making sweeping changes in a program. Here's how:

- Develop a tool or process that identifies the questions to ask to determine the gap.
- Collect and analyze the answers.
- Determine the most appropriate solution(s) to close the gap.

Keep the following in mind:

Before starting, document your assumptions, i.e. those ideas about a volunteer program that you suppose are true or that you take for granted.

Make certain any program developed supports the organization's mission by consulting your organization's strategic plan, including its mission, needs analysis, goals, programs, resources. Then, design questions to facilitate this process. Involve all stakeholders (staff, volunteer program manager, upper management, human resources, any existing volunteers, and members of the community or client groups) at some level in the process of providing input for the needs analysis.

Decide which goals are achievable in a reasonable amount of time, such as one to three years or three to five years.

### Survey Basics

- Establish a committee to develop a plan of action.
- List important issues to be addressed.
- Identify the population to be surveyed.
- Determine the information you need. (That may mean existing information to collect, or it may mean gathering new information using a survey.)
- Select a random sample of persons to survey.
- Develop and pre-test a questionnaire.
- Collect information.
- Analyze the data.
- Report the results.
- Formulate an action plan.

### Target Audience

Think about the people or groups you're considering as the focus of your project; this is your target audience. You can concentrate on one of your organization's audiences (internal, such as staff and volunteers, or external, such as grade

school teachers interested in humane education programs, or potential adopters).

Your project may have more than one target audience, for example:

**Immediate beneficiaries:** target audience(s), such as volunteers and staff, who will experience the project's benefits in the earliest stages of its implementation, and whose involvement may be necessary to ensure that the desired results are fulfilled.

**Intermediate beneficiaries:** target audience(s), such as teachers, groomers, and outside animal care agencies, who will experience the project's benefits within one to two years of its implementation.

**Long-term beneficiaries:** target audience(s), such as adopters, students who benefited from humane education and the community as a whole, who will experience the project's benefits after its completion.

This distinction is important because the needs, wants, and characteristics of target audiences will likely differ. While the immediate beneficiaries may be the main focus of your project, consider the needs of the long-term beneficiaries, if at all possible.

When evaluating the wants of your audiences, look at their level of interest and motivation as well as their perceptions of the various possible solutions.

The attributes or abilities of the target audience are important characteristics to take into account and may include data on:

- The estimated number of people in each target audience.

- The geographical location(s) of the target audience.
- Any additional attributes, such as language, mobility, or economic considerations.

When deciding how to collect data from various audiences, remember to select that method that will be best for each audience. You may choose from a variety of methods including:

- Written questionnaires or surveys
- Knowledge or performance assessments
- Structured observations
- Focus groups
- Telephone interviews

### **Data Collection**

Collect the following types of data about the target audience or audiences identified in the previous task:

- Result you want to achieve (or services to provide)
- Current level of services
- Gap between the desired result and the current level, the importance of that gap and its causes
- Target audience wants
- Target audience characteristics

This will enable you to select the best possible outcomes to close the gap. When considering the gap, look at how large it is, what does closing the gap achieve, and what happens if the gap remains open.

### **Survey Format**

When developing a survey tool, keep in mind the outcome you would like to obtain. For example:

#### Outcome

- Increase save rate

#### Definition

- Increase the percentage of animals successfully adopted from your shelter

#### Potential Factors/Programs:

- Grooming services
- Dog obedience training
- Cat socialization
- Education on breed tendencies
- Cleanliness of shelter
- Noise level in shelter
- Customer service
- Availability of animal supplies

#### Outcome

- Humane Education (HE)

#### Definition

- Increase level of humane knowledge in the community

#### Potential Factors/Programs:

- HE for elementary school-age students (provide speakers for in-services)
- HE for middle-school students (provide curriculum and guest speakers for modules)
- HE for high-school students (provide volunteer opportunities for students where humane treatment is modeled)
- HE to adult community (provide radio PSAs on topics such as animals in cars, spay/neuter, dogs in the back of pickups, cat care, and how rabbits make good pets)

### **Questionnaire Ideas**

Design questions that will indicate the importance of the various options, for example: (Note: you will probably want to design your questions with more depth, this is merely a high-level view of how a survey might be designed.)

For example:

**Adoption**

I would consider adopting the following types of animals from No Name Animal Shelter

- Cat
- Dog
- Rabbit
- Ferret
- Other Small Mammal
- Bird
- Reptile
- Horse
- Potbelly Pig
- Farm Animal

On a scale of 1 to 3

1. Would not impact my decision to adopt at all
  2. Would somewhat impact my decision to adopt
  3. Would greatly impact my decision to adopt
- The pet is well-groomed and smells clean
  - A dog or puppy knows basic commands: “sit,” “down”
  - A dog or puppy is leash-trained
  - A cat or kitten appears at ease with people
  - A cat or kitten is friendly and outgoing
  - Someone has explained the behavioral tendencies of different types or breeds of animals to me
  - The noise level in the shelter
  - The way the shelter smells
  - How clean the kennels are
  - How clean the office area is
  - Ability to contact shelter workers on the phone
  - Knowing shelter workers will contact me after adoption to see if I have questions
  - Friendly, welcoming staff
  - Information on how to care for my new pet

- Availability of pet supplies, such as leashes, carriers, litter boxes, bowls, food, toys, etc.

Now, indicate the top five items that are most important to you:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Program Support**

What humane education programs would you support at No Name Animal Shelter. Please use the following scale (1 to 3):

1. Would not support
  2. Would consider supporting
  3. Would definitely support
- Volunteer speakers in elementary classes
  - Development of curriculum for presentation to middle-school classes
  - Volunteer speakers for middle-school classes
  - Volunteer speakers for high-school classes
  - Program development involving high-school students volunteering to teach humane education to younger students
  - Program development involving high-school students volunteering to obedience train animals
  - Community outreach, such as public service announcements

Please go back and indicate which activities you would support with:

- V – Volunteering to be involved in the project
- A – Assisting by donating money to No Name Shelter
- O – Providing other assistance, such as in-kind donation of goods, supplies, or services

## Starting a Volunteer Program

Ultimately, it benefits your agency's volunteer program to build a strong foundation from the start. Investigate the following components at the onset of your program, and then reevaluate periodically to maintain program integrity.

- **Vision Statement** (typically one sentence to depict your overall program goal and how it will complement your agency's mission)
- **Volunteer Reference Guide** (formatted to include information about your agency)
- **Volunteer Service Descriptions** (outlining major objectives, duties, and training requirements)
- **Action Plans** (recruitment efforts, training, and recognition)
- **Feedback Loop** (regular performance evaluations for volunteers)
- **Records System** (tracking volunteer time contributions)

If you are inheriting an established volunteer program, consider the history of the program.

- When was the volunteer program established, and why?
- Are original objectives still applicable?
- Has the culture of your organization shifted significantly, which would create the need to realign the vision of your volunteer program?
- Has the volunteer duration of service been lengthy or short? If short, is it obvious why, and what can be done to improve the length of service per volunteer?

## Budgeting

There are costs associated with maintaining an effective volunteer program, such as printing training materials, purchasing uniforms, and paying staff to coordinate the volunteer program. Establish a reasonable budget to support the goals of the volunteer program and ensure that it continues to grow annually.

Consider the following when developing a budget to present to your Board of Directors:

- Staff salaries and benefits
- Computer software for tracking the volunteer program
- Volunteer insurance
- Office use and equipment needed to sustain the volunteer program
- Printing and postage
- Phone and e-mail accounts
- Supplies (volunteer nametags, uniforms, tools needed for volunteers to perform the functions of their assignments)
- Volunteer training (advancement training for volunteer leadership, training needed to build specific skill sets)
- Volunteer recognition and appreciation (gifts, banquets, celebrations)

## Volunteer Reference Guide

A Volunteer Reference Guide outlines an organization's culture, mission and services, including the role of volunteers and expectations of how volunteers complement the organization's mission and goals. Review materials from other non-profit organizations, including other shelters or volunteer management organizations, when developing your

Volunteer Reference Guide. It'll give you plenty of ideas on not only content but also format. The American Humane Association recommends that agencies review and update their Volunteer Reference Guide annually, or as needed when changes occur.

A well-written, organized, and complete volunteer handbook is crucial. It's your primary educational tool and much more. For that reason, require volunteers to sign an Acknowledgement of Receipt form and place it in their personal volunteer files.

Ultimately, your handbook should serve as a complete volunteer reference that covers in detail the following suggested topics:

### **Your Organization**

- History, mission and goals of the agency
- Organizational chart
- Services the agency offers to the community
- Core procedures and positions
  - Euthanasia
  - Adoption (including any restrictions on volunteer adoptions)
  - Spay/neuter
  - Misc. humane position statements on animal-related topics (e.g., biomedical testing and research, hunting, zoos, etc.)

### **Volunteer Program**

- History of the volunteer program (what volunteers have done / are doing to support the mission)
- Volunteer guidelines
- Program opportunities
  - Detailed volunteer service descriptions (Include hard copies in the handbook or refer

people to your website for the most current versions.)

- Responsible and kind treatment of animals
- Consultation of volunteer manager when concerns arise
- Attendance
- Dress code
- Telephone calls
- Friends, family or children tagging along (not allowed to assist unless they complete volunteer process themselves)
- Tax benefits (volunteers can claim tax deductions on in-kind donations, direct cash contributions, and automobile mileage, if not reimbursed. They should contact their tax accountant or the IRS with any questions.)
- Conflict resolution procedures
- Volunteer Application Process
  - Two copies of the application/personal profile form — one to complete and one to keep
  - Instructions on where, when, and to whom to return the form
  - What is the next step? Interview, orientation, training, reading the handbook – the order will depend on what works well for you and your organization
  - How to contact the volunteer manager for additional information
- Process for ending volunteer service
- Frequently asked questions
- Public relations and media restrictions
- Security
- Holidays
- Off-limits areas
- Care and use of equipment

- Memorandums related to general or volunteer practices that will impact their volunteer position

### **Safety and Disclosures**

- Insurance coverage and limitations
- Accidents, injuries, and prevention (including animal bites)
- Health and safety information (chemicals used and zoonotic disease risks)
- Liability waiver, Acknowledgement of Receipt and other necessary forms

### **Bulletin Board Postings**

Post reminders on bulletin boards to reinforce key information provided in the volunteer handbook, such as:

- Be on time. If for some reason you are unable to come at your designated time, please call.
- Sign in and out in the volunteer sign-in book.
- Use designated areas for smoking, eating, or drinking.
- Report any injury during your volunteer shift to your supervisor, the volunteer manager, or the executive director.
- Give feedback and suggestions, but remember that you need to be willing to participate in solutions.

### **Welcome Letter**

A welcome letter to the volunteer from the volunteer program manager at the beginning of your volunteer handbook is a nice way to begin. The following was adapted from a letter written by the Humane Society of Boulder Valley in Boulder, Colorado:

Welcome to the No Name Animal Shelter volunteer program. We appreciate your

interest in our organization and share your desire to make the world a better place for animals. As a nonprofit animal care agency, we depend on our volunteer team, your time and your skills, to actively support our organizational efforts to provide quality care for the animals at the shelter and in our community.

We are committed to supporting your role as a volunteer by presenting you with consistent, thorough, and professional training. The shelter's volunteer training program is designed to keep you informed and safe, and to enhance your skills.

As you become familiar with the various volunteer programs, you may develop multiple interests. If ever you are ready to explore a new program, let us know. We will be happy to introduce you to different opportunities.

It is our hope that you will find your volunteer experience at the No Name Animal Shelter enjoyable and rewarding. You can be certain that your contribution is truly appreciated by both the staff and the animals!

With kind regards,

### **Covering Euthanasia**

Euthanasia is probably one of the most difficult issues for staff and volunteers. Therefore, many animal shelters feel it necessary to include a statement in their volunteer handbooks and address the issue from the very beginning during the orientation.

Because euthanasia is a very difficult subject to discuss, including a letter from the staff in the volunteer handbook is one way to communicate many of the feelings



that arise in your agency. The letter should be reviewed and revised at least annually by employees involved in the process. The following sample letter was adapted from one that was written by The Humane Society at Lollypop Farm, Fairport, NY.

Dear Colleague:

Although a difficult subject, euthanasia is something we must think about before making a commitment to volunteer in a shelter. Unfortunately, due to the nature of sheltering animals, it is necessary for us to euthanize some of the animals we receive. Depending on the circumstances, you may never see the animal, or you may have interacted and even have become fond of an animal that is euthanized.

Please understand that the decision to euthanize (for every single animal) is well thought through. It is very difficult to make the decision, hold him/her, and then actually perform euthanasia. Our shelter's policy is to perform euthanasia in the most humane manner possible, using euthanasia by injection as our only method for dogs and cats. Other species may be euthanized using alternate methods recognized by the American Humane Association and the American Veterinary Medical Association as appropriate and acceptable.

Decisions, however unpopular, must be made. Please do not confront the staff involved with euthanasia with questions or statements like:

- “Who are you killing tomorrow?”
- “How can you kill them? You people are cold-hearted.”
- “Why is Fido being put to sleep?”

This type of feedback only makes a difficult-but-necessary part of their job harder. Staff members are here because

they genuinely like and want to help animals, and performing euthanasia is no more difficult on anyone else than it is on the people whose job responsibility is to perform euthanasia.

As a volunteer, be prepared to answer questions concerning euthanasia from your friends and people you meet who know that you volunteer in an animal shelter. It is important for you to both understand and be able to discuss the topic in an objective manner.

If you have questions or concerns about either the euthanasia process in general, or a particular decision, please bring those concerns to the volunteer manager for discussion. We understand that your questions and feelings need a forum for discussion. Because compassion fatigue associated with dealing with these issues is common, our shelter can offer assistance in working through them.

We are all here to work together, and trust is one of the most basic needs. It is only with your help and understanding that we will be able to achieve our goals.

## Record Keeping

Record keeping systems will vary from agency to agency, but all share one common purpose — the ability to clearly and effectively substantiate the value of volunteer contributions on a weekly, monthly, and annual basis.

If shopping for computer software to support your volunteer program, visit several agencies with established software in a variety of packages and ask to see features that will help you determine which software is the best match for your budget and needs. Ask for advice via e-mail distribution lists or professional volunteer management associations.

Whether you collect hours manually in three-ring binders, or your volunteers sign into a computer system, it is critical that volunteers understand the importance of documenting their contributions and comply with record-keeping processes. So, consider demonstrating how to record hours in every volunteer training session.

Accurate data is important for the following reasons:

- Donors and grantors like to see volunteer information as a sign of strong community support.
- Volunteers sometimes need a summary of hours to use for class credit or for employers who make financial contributions to match the volunteer's service value.
- Program and service measurements and adjustments are best made with detailed information about volunteer participation.
- It's easier to recognize and celebrate volunteer efforts when you have records to prove progress and outcomes on tasks performed.

- Your legal, insurance, and/or tax professional may require it.

## Generally Accepted Accounting Principles

Some animal welfare agencies must follow Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). If you receive government funding, you could be penalized for non-compliance with GAAP procedures. Ask your accountant if your agency uses this model. If you don't have a staff accountant, ask a board member or other local agency. According to Nonprofit Volunteer Management, new standards of the Financial Accounting Standards Board require the inclusion of volunteer hours in your financial statement:

- If the services provided are essential to your operation;
- If services create or enhance non-financial assets; or
- If services require specialized skills, are provided by individuals possessing those skills, and would typically need to be purchased, if not provided by donation.

## Record Storage

According to the IRS and agency time audit periods, all volunteer records should be maintained for seven years before being purged or modified. In addition, over time, accurate record-keeping will help you determine your volunteer demographic, as well as trends in program popularity and decline.

### **Quantitative Statistics**

Log and track the following information:

- Number of students
- Addresses of volunteers, sorted by zip code or neighborhood
- Number and type (e.g., clerical, professional, direct service) of hours completed by each volunteer during each year
- Total hours given to the volunteer program, by department, event, or volunteer position
- Training hours completed

### **Qualitative Achievements**

Beyond the facts and figures of the volunteer program, track qualitative achievements as well, including:

- Accomplishments made possible by your volunteer program
- Expansion of your volunteer program or other agency programs enabled by volunteers
- Diversity in your volunteer population
- Use of special populations for increased program opportunities (e.g., retired citizens, special needs individuals, and student interns)
- The information received from volunteers during orientations, beginning and exit interviews, training and recognition events, and how the information has been used

### **Individual Volunteer Records**

As a volunteer manager, build profiles of your volunteer team. Documenting the following things will help you develop, evaluate, and recognize volunteers:

- General volunteer information (name, address, phone numbers, e-mail address)
- Schedule availability
- Emergency contact information
- Trainings attended
- Recognition received (when and by whom)
- Professional service skills
- Affiliations with other groups or non-profit agencies

## Program Evaluation

Write down the details of your evaluation process in your initial plan. Otherwise, it may be overlooked later. Evaluating your volunteer program can reveal if anything is ineffective and needs to be changed or discontinued and also ensures it continues to achieve its objectives and contribute to your agency's larger strategic plans. In fact, the most important reason to evaluate your volunteer program has more to do with your entire agency: Volunteer program evaluations show specific results to supporters, adopters, and funders alike, and helps everyone plan for the future.

Make overall program evaluation results available to both volunteers and employees. An easy way to do that is to include the results in your newsletter or annual report.

Have your agency's management staff and decisionmakers, your volunteers, and those who receive a direct service from your volunteer program contribute to the evaluation process. Make the evaluation non-threatening. Offer respondents a variety of evaluative methods, from formal to informal, verbal to written, and Q/A to discussion. Questions can be open-ended, offer a choice of answer, or request a selection from a range (i.e., agree, somewhat agree, don't know, somewhat disagree, disagree). Always offer a time or space for general comments.

Many agencies choose annual or biannual timing for evaluations. Consider the "benchmark" times during your volunteer's tenure as topics of feedback for evaluations: orientation, screening, interviewing, training, recognition/awards, project completion, and end of volunteer service. Even encourage volunteers to evaluate your evaluation tools and process.

Improving your evaluation procedures helps you get the feedback necessary to optimize your program's function and impact.

Regardless of the benchmark being evaluated, keep your goals in mind and ask questions that will help you achieve those goals. Evaluation is an ongoing process, so don't stop evaluating once you compile results or get feedback about the first year of a volunteer's experience.

A few topics to be included on evaluation tools for various benchmarks include:

- Why the volunteer decided to donate time to your agency
- How integrated volunteers are in the program, from planning the program to providing opportunities for feedback
- How well you match expectations with the actual volunteer experience, or service description with the volunteer's skills
- How well you recognize the volunteers' contributions and accomplishments
- General comments on those aspects of the program the volunteer would like to see continue and those where dissatisfaction or a desire for change were indicated
- Whether or not the orientation and training(s) were clear, complete, and easy to understand
- Whether supervisors are accessible and supportive
- If the facility provides a good environment
- If opportunities for improving skills are offered

To help you establish a format for your own role in the program's progress, the

American Humane Association offers the following outline of a personal assessment/action plan:

### **Leadership**

- What are your major strengths as a leader?
- In what areas do you need improvement?

### **Vision**

- What is the vision that you have for your program for the next three years?
- Is this vision in harmony with the organization's mission and vision?
- Have you gathered input from needs assessments as well as from volunteers and employees?
- What actions will you need to take to convert that vision into reality?

### **Team Development**

- What are the strengths and limitations of your present program's team in working toward common goals?
- What actions should you take to improve and empower the team?

### **Positioning**

- What are the key features of your strategy for moving from where you are now toward your vision?
- What will be the major obstacles in implementing the strategy?
- How do you plan to overcome each of these obstacles?

### **Communicating**

- What are your strengths and limitations as a communicator?
- What actions should you take to become a more effective communicator?

### **Empowering**

- What are the primary motivators for each person who reports directly to you?
- What methods did you use to determine their motivations? Are there different or better tools you could use to help you understand and reward each person based on his/her motivation?
- What actions should you take to better motivate these people?

### **Coaching**

- What are the critical success factors for your program during the coming year?
- What is one action you could take with each of these people to help meet their developmental needs?
- Would additional training or mentoring would be of help to your volunteers? If so, how can you supply what they need?

## Recruitment

Assess your volunteer needs before you recruit, and put a recruitment and retention plan in place before you begin accepting volunteer applications. Do not start recruiting until all implementation steps are planned and ready to go. You should be able to answer these questions:

- What is your recruitment plan?
- What type of people do you need and where will you locate them?
- Are all recruitment options (e.g., newsletter, website, web-based matching services, personal contact, bulletin boards, media) being used that are appropriate for your program?
- What is your process for ongoing recruitment?

Make any recruitment materials clear about what you expect from the volunteer and what they can expect from you. Be sure to select your vehicles for recruitment carefully so that you reach your target audience. Specifically state what skills you seek from volunteers in your recruiting materials. Desperation in your recruitment efforts may sound like no one wants the volunteer position.

Many agencies across the country are utilizing volunteers. There is a renewed interest in volunteering. Investigate the possibilities of partnering with other agencies to avoid duplication of services while maximizing the skills of available volunteers.

There may even be a volunteer referral service in your community that will prescreen volunteers and match interests with organizations. The United Way, Voluntary Action Center, and Volunteer Bureau are examples. You will probably need to provide volunteer service

descriptions, information on your agency, and a copy of your volunteer handbook to other organizations that are interested in collaborative efforts.

There are also websites that will help you to recruit and even track volunteers. These organizations are listed in the reference section of this guide.

## Identifying Volunteers and Other Resources

A volunteer is anyone who gives his or her time and talents by choice and without monetary reward. Other resource pools that may be considered are persons who provide community service due to court or school requirements.

Each unique community offers valuable volunteer resources if you know where to look. Know your audience and specifically target recruitment efforts to benefit your agency.

## Stay-at-Home Parents

Stay-at-home parents wish to remain involved with the community and can often work on administrative or committee projects from home.

## Elders

Elder communities offer individuals with experience and talent to sustain long-term positions.

## Service and Professional Organizations

Service and professional organizations have talented members who are interested in being involved in community projects. Transitional education classes can supply individuals with special needs, often also supplying a coach.

## **Students**

Middle and high schools often encourage or require students to perform community service.

## **Youth Organizations**

Scouting, 4-H, Future Farmers of America, and other after-school organizations often provide teams of volunteers with adult supervision for younger volunteers.

## **Colleges**

Colleges may team with individuals interested in short-term projects and may include both students and instructors, or sororities and fraternities.

## **Military**

Military bases are full of parents and children looking for distractions from daily life.

## **Companies**

Businesses often have programs encouraging their employees to volunteer.

## **Other Spots**

Don't forget these markets:

- Volunteer fairs
- Agency clients, adopters, donors, and their families
- New residents in the community
- Visitors to your facility
- Programs such as VISTA's anti-poverty work program (800-424-8867); RSVP (retired citizens) (202-606-4851); Points of Light Foundation (800-879-5400)

## **Youth Volunteers**

More schools now require students to engage in community service activities as part of their course requirements. These young people not only learn about your

agency but also gain life skills and can be an important part of your program. Offer volunteer positions that students would enjoy while keeping your liability to a minimum. A positive experience during youth helps them gain an appreciation for animal care agencies and volunteering as a whole.

Ask students to help you identify volunteer opportunities that would appeal to their age level. They could even help you rewrite materials for students. Any staff who work with youth volunteers need to know exactly what the students will be doing and how they can be of help to the student.

Risk management is especially important with young people. Keep safety issues in mind as you consider task options. If you think twice about a task being appropriate for a young person, avoid matching a youth with that type of volunteer position.

As always, consult your attorney.

If a student is interested in only fulfilling a requirement, you may have them for a short amount of time. Your typical training may not be worth it. Ask the student for a time commitment that extends beyond course requirements or tailor a project which only requires a few hours to be completed.

## **Community Service**

Many animal care and control agencies utilize individuals who have been sentenced in the courts to perform community service. This can be an effective pool of volunteers, but you need to work closely with your court system. Tell the court what kind of volunteers you can use and clearly state that a supervisor

must approve the volunteer's time before any credit is given.

Screening is essential to make sure the volunteer can perform the tasks. Many animal care and control agencies do not consider anyone with a history of animal cruelty, violent criminal acts, theft, or burglary. Some agencies have community service volunteers limit their activities to grounds maintenance, laundry, or dishes due to lack of time to provide adequate training.

### **Staff as Volunteers**

Often staff may inquire about volunteering. There are a number of legal considerations, so be sure to consult your agency's legal counsel. Because of the Fair Labor Standards Act, a staff person must volunteer in a completely different capacity than the one for which they are paid. Otherwise, you could be sued for overtime or back pay. If you decide to allow staff to volunteer, make it clear up front and in writing that staff are not required to volunteer as a condition of their employment.

Any staff person wanting to volunteer should go through the same process as any other volunteer and have approval from their supervisor and other designated members of upper management. This applies to volunteering inside or outside of your operations. Be very careful what you ask a staff person to do. If it is "helping out" at an event with a job they do at your facility, you may have to pay them. To double check, call your local wage and hour office and ask about nonexempt and exempt staff volunteer restrictions or consult your legal counsel.

When a staff person ends their employment but wants to continue or begin volunteering, obtain approval from their former supervisor or your HR department.

### **Word of Mouth**

The most effective volunteer recruitment tool is word of mouth from a satisfied volunteer, the people you serve, your board, and your staff.

### **Other Ways**

Other ways to spread the word require web content, brochures, videos, recorded radio spots, Public Service Announcements (PSAs), posters and the like. A few places to use these include:

- Other organizations' bulletins (i.e., church bulletins)
- Corporate newsletters from local businesses
- Announcements at events and meetings
- Community/business bulletin boards (especially pet-related businesses, such as groomers, veterinarian offices, pet supply stores and such)
- Schools/colleges
- Senior centers
- Laundromats
- Civic clubs
- Chamber of commerce offices
- Any correspondence going from your organization to members of the community
- Media: newspapers, radio, TV, weekly or regional publications
- Your facility and anywhere you do community outreach



## **Selection and Placement**

It is important to pay special attention to the selection process. Design a volunteer interview and placement process that works for your agency to maximize efforts.

### ***First Phone Call***

The initial telephone call may be the first step in your selection process. The person might call you to inquire about volunteering, or you might make a follow-up phone call after the person attends orientation and decides to volunteer.

If it's a call to schedule an interview or orientation session, use it as an opportunity to allow for questions. If the person changes their mind about volunteering, your call could help them become a supporter in another way.

The phone call is an easy way to start prescreening. Set up a friendly conversational atmosphere, but let the caller do most of the talking. Ask what volunteer experience they have had and if it was fun or educational. If they indicate that they had a negative volunteer experience in the past, ask for more information. This will give you insight into whether this person and your volunteer program are a good fit. It will also give you the opportunity to discuss why they would like to volunteer and available opportunities.

The initial contact is also the best time to state your agency's mission and talk about the volunteer interview, training, and placement process. Include basic information about your agency such as:

1. We spay/neuter all animals that are adopted (without exception).
2. We perform euthanasia. (Or, we are a limited access shelter.)

Potential volunteers should be comfortable with these practices, or your agency may not be a good match for them. Let the prospective volunteer know that the interview is an opportunity to match up volunteer skills and interests with appropriate volunteer program(s) and to ensure a satisfactory experience for the volunteer.

### ***Volunteer Applications***

Have them complete a volunteer application and sign a release form drafted by your agency's legal counsel. Some agencies include text in the release form indicating they give permission for your agency to check references and also undergo criminal background checks. The application and volunteer interview are valuable tools for getting to know people who want to join your volunteer program.

Include questions on the application asking what applicants know about your organization, why they are interested in volunteering for your agency, what they would like to get out of the volunteer experience, if they have volunteered for other animal-related organizations, and about their past volunteer experiences.

Include language on your form that says you will try to place the volunteer in their volunteer position of choice but cannot guarantee a position will be available. Avoid guaranteeing a position to a volunteer in case you later feel that the position might not be a good fit.

### ***Disclaimers/Waivers***

In addition to the volunteer application, the volunteer or a parent or guardian for those under 18 must sign a disclaimer or waiver. Although disclaimers/waivers won't completely protect you from

liability, they serve as good documentation (and they're good risk management) to confirm that volunteers were provided with, read, and understood your procedures as well as the risks involved with the volunteer position.

Have volunteers sign additional waivers or acknowledgements regarding training materials, your volunteer handbook, taking and using their picture for news or promotional media stories, and zoonoses (infectious disease passed from animal to human) potential. See the sample waivers in the Appendixes section of this guide, or refer to the American Humane Association's Operational Guide on Zoonoses for additional information.

Be clear with volunteers about possible infectious disease exposure at your agency. However, be cautious about asking the volunteer for any information concerning any aspect of their health. It cannot, nor should not, be construed as discrimination. Check with your agency's human resources department, legal counsel, or a volunteer management pool for what questions may and may not be appropriate in your state and under federal law.

### ***The Interview***

The next step in your selection process is a volunteer interview. An interview will give you the opportunity to match up skills and abilities with appropriate volunteer positions. The application should be utilized during the interview as a base of information.

Although it's ideal for the volunteer program manager to conduct the interview, other leadership volunteers or employees may also conduct interviews.

Allow people interested in volunteering to share:

- Their volunteer service history
- Interests and skills
- Why they chose your organization
- What they are hoping to get out of their volunteer experience
- Time commitment
- Any questions they may have about the agency or volunteer positions

In return, you discuss:

- The process of becoming a volunteer at your agency
- Overview of the orientation. If your agency conducts orientations before interviews, inquire if they have any follow-up questions.
- Expectations of volunteers, including philosophical alignment
- Details of various volunteer positions and time commitments
- Next steps (i.e. training, scheduling, etc.)
- Any questions they may raise

There are two types of interview questions: closed and open-ended. Closed questions address your need to quickly get a "yes" or "no." Open-ended questions require more information and discussion and help you understand a volunteer's motivations for choosing your agency, as well as their interests.

Keep information confidential. Allow time for questions and answers, and communicate clearly. Be honest about your agency. Emphasize the importance of volunteers by stating your agency depends upon each of them to follow through with their volunteer commitments.

Let them know that you consider both agency and volunteer needs when considering placement.

### **Additional Interview Questions**

Here are a few suggestions for exploring an applicant's suitability for your program:

- Ask how they feel about euthanasia, spaying and neutering or other relevant organizational programs and services.
- Add in a few "what if" questions, such as "What would you do if an adopter was rude to you?"

Outline responsibilities and duties of each volunteer position in written volunteer service descriptions. Include any special requirements a volunteer will need, such as ability to travel offsite, ability to lift specified weights, training required, and time availability. Share this detailed information during the interview. This is an effective way to relay this information.

### **Calling References**

Asking for references on the volunteer application and then following up with a call to the references is not always possible, but it is good practice if you wish to learn more about the person. A potential volunteer who fails to provide references may raise a red flag for you. Confirm the information provided by references whenever possible.

Here are some sample questions:

- How long have they known the person?
- Was the person responsible, and did he/she follow through on commitments?
- Describe the person's personality and strengths.

- Does the volunteer have adequate experience, and does he/she have the ability to work with people?
- How well does the potential volunteer deal with difficult situations?

### **Developing Volunteer Service Descriptions**

Volunteer service descriptions are versatile and valuable assets to any volunteer program. They can help motivate and recruit volunteers to your program, and they can be used to offer feedback to existing volunteers.

In animal care agencies, it is common to break down volunteer opportunities into three categories:

- **Animal Care** (kennel assistants, veterinary support, behavior modification programs, adoption liaisons)
- **Community Outreach** (ambassadors, pet therapy, mobile adoption units, humane education)
- **Fundraising and Special Events** (committee work, ticket sales, events, thrift and gift shops)

Include the following content when building volunteer service descriptions:

- Major Objectives
- Duties
- Training requirements
- Time commitment (Is there a minimum schedule commitment?)
- Volunteer profile (What type of person will perform well in this role?)
- Volunteer perks (Flexible schedule, skills building, social affiliation)
- Supervision

A sample service description is included in the Appendixes.

### **Placement and Review**

If the prescreening, application, and interview all indicate that the applicant would be an appropriate volunteer, you're ready for placement. Schedule training, assign the volunteer to a position, and discuss a starting date. Monitor new volunteers throughout training.

### **Orientation**

Orientations give those interested in your organization a better understanding of your agency. In many organizations, anyone is invited to attend and participation is mandatory for new volunteers. The orientation gives the person an opportunity to learn more about your organization as well as your volunteer program. Some organizations require a prospective volunteer to attend orientation before arranging for an individual interview. This can save time if your resources are limited. You can cover information for all prospective volunteers in one meeting. Some people may decide your volunteer program and organization aren't a good fit, perhaps because of the time commitment needed, age requirements, or your euthanasia practices.

Accommodate personal time constraints by holding orientations on a variety of days and at different times. Provide a sign-in list to get names, addresses, and phone numbers, since you'll want to make follow-up phone calls to those wanting to volunteer.

Plan an agenda and presentation for your orientation. The amount of time you devote to the orientation and the content should meet the needs and expectations of

those attending, which may include returning volunteers. Topics typically covered are an overview of your organization, including its history and programs, the agency's major events, a description of the volunteer program, and details about various volunteer positions.

Keep in mind different learning styles (visual, auditory, hands-on) when formatting presentations. If available, ask your humane educator, human resources staff or other outreach personnel for help developing the orientation program. If this is not possible, do some research into adult learning theory to help you better understand how to best reach your audience. Understand that participants need to be both informed and involved. Videotapes or PowerPoint presentations offer a broad and entertaining picture of what you do as an organization, but should only be one portion of the orientation.

You may choose to offer written orientation material as well as a tour of the facility to reinforce the information covered at the orientation session. If you have the time, group discussion and role-playing is an option. These suggested formats could help you break up information into segments to hold your audience's attention.

Orientations can be brief or last all day, but pay attention to the clock and limit the session to the amount of time you advertise.

The orientation can be an excellent time to share your volunteer handbook. It should include most of what you cover in the orientation and training. Maintain the manual in a form that can be constantly updated, such as a three-ring binder.

## Pre-Service Training

The pre-service training should include the reasons for the volunteer position (e.g., how the position directly relates to your agency's mission). Make it complete but concise so that volunteers can get started and feel like they are contributing. Clearly define position duties and give detailed instructions to ensure the volunteer is trained appropriately.

Explain the volunteer position in a manner that works best for the individual. Do they learn best by hearing or reading instructions or by being shown how to perform their duties? Do they already know how to perform the duties (for example, grooming) but need to be introduced to disease protocol and safety practices such as parasite control and limiting bite-risk?

It is useful to provide volunteers with a written handbook outlining the volunteer position or ask them to take written notes. Trainers should design interactive curriculum to ensure volunteers learn the material.

Pre-service training should include how to do the volunteer position, the position's limitations, and general information such as:

- The location of restrooms, break areas, parking
- Location of supplies and materials that apply to the position
- Dress requirements (Identify volunteers in some way: buttons, shirts, or aprons; everyone should have a nametag.)
- Safe places for personal items
- Hours of operation including holidays (a repeat from orientation)

- What steps are taken and where to go in case of emergencies such as storms or fires
- Safety guidelines and accident reporting
- Procedure for sharing concerns and your agency's conflict resolution procedure (this is important to have in writing. Volunteers should know that it might be necessary to schedule an appointment rather than immediately see a supervisor or the executive director.)

If at all possible, introduce volunteers and staff at the beginning of training. It is a good relationship-building tool, and it's a great way for staff to explain what they do and educate the volunteer at the same time.

## Ongoing Training

There are many benefits to providing ongoing training for volunteers. Volunteers enhance their skills and thereby provide excellent service to your agency and its customers. Other benefits for volunteers include:

- A sense of accomplishment
- More independence
- Feeling included in the organization
- Expanded scope of responsibility
- Bringing new skills into the organization

Because training can account for a large percentage of your volunteer program budget, plan it thoughtfully. Compile training materials from service descriptions, input from staff, volunteer evaluations for program improvement, and other animal care agencies. If each volunteer position has a level of

expectation, then it will be possible to advance the person to the next level with appropriate training.

In-service training should accommodate the volunteer's responsibilities, learning levels, and developed skills. If time, money, or general logistics make in-service training difficult, try putting together material and organize a resource library. It's a great way to make ongoing training available to everyone.

Training from outside the organization can also promote volunteer skills, satisfaction and, if structured to do so, allow for those skills to be disseminated to other volunteers and employees.

### ***Opportunity for Advancement***

Provide an opportunity for volunteers to change volunteer positions or pursue advancement in your volunteer program. Use this as a motivator by pointing it out during your interview.

## **Insurance and Risk Management**

Insurance needs and availability vary from state to state. Check with your state's Insurance Board to find out what is needed. This is another area where networking with nonprofits and other animal care and control agencies may help you connect with available resources in your area.

Although a volunteer may have some personal liability coverage through their homeowner's or renter's policy, keep in mind that you and the agency may also be sued for a volunteer's actions. In addition, a volunteer may bring suit against your agency, so it is important to minimize the exposure to liability by both managing risk and by having insurance in place.

Risk management may include following all OSHA regulations, doing temperament testing on all animals, adequately training volunteers and staff in their duties and working with animals, maintaining vehicles properly, providing protective clothing and equipment, offering help with compassion fatigue management, and other such programs.

Make OSHA regulations available to volunteers. In addition, provide information on safety procedures (e.g. how to safely remove animals from kennels) in written form such as standard operating procedures and volunteer handbooks. Routinely check with volunteers and supervisors to make certain the information is up-to-date, available, and put into practice.

**Your workers compensation policy does not apply to volunteers. It is for employees only.**

## **Recognition**

Recognition is a key ingredient for keeping volunteers. Retaining volunteers is important not only because it allows you to complete important projects and gain a reputation in the community for doing so, but it allows you to reap the benefits that knowledgeable and experienced volunteers can offer in the long term.

To retain volunteers, you need to be flexible with their schedules (although you want them to be responsible for their commitments), give them an opportunity to have a break from your organization, send volunteers to meetings and workshops when at all possible, let volunteers represent your nonprofit when appropriate, and at every single opportunity, above all, recognize their efforts.

Recognition motivates volunteers and keeps them encouraged and interested in continuing their work for your agency. If your volunteer program is successful, you'll have reason to celebrate. Every single volunteer is important. The care, concern, and interest the staff conveys to the volunteer carries into the volunteer's position. This is the key to your volunteer program's success.

Everyone appreciates having their efforts acknowledged, but we all like hearing "thank you" in different ways. Ideally, a manager should identify what motivates staff and volunteers, and recognize them in the manner they most value.

### ***Types of Motivators***

People generally value one of four different types of motivators:

## **Affiliation/Social**

People who are most rewarded by being affiliated with a group value the relationship aspect of volunteering. They need to feel that they are a part of the organization and require time to socialize during the course of their service. They enjoy social gatherings, name badges/uniforms that show others they are affiliated with the group, and team projects and lists that their name appears on, especially with pictures.

## **Achievement/Accomplishment**

All people like to succeed, but for this group succeeding is their prime motivator. They enjoy clear goals and measurable outcomes. To reward them, provide certificates of accomplishments and post graphs showing achievements and progress toward goals.

## **Empowerment/Influence**

Some volunteers will most enjoy programs and projects that impact and influence others. They enjoy using their persuasive powers and make good speakers, presenters, and guides. They value titles, especially if the title changes to show advancement. They enjoy meeting and receiving recognition from VIPs, such as upper management or others in the community. They are often motivated to become "Volunteer of the Year" or other opportunities to be recognized publicly.

## **Praise/Approval**

Although it is important to extend praise and approval to everyone, a portion of the volunteer pool values this above all else. They respond best to sincere acknowledgements on a regular basis.

They like to know that their presence and contributions are prized. A handwritten thank-you note or token “gifts” along with letters of praise/recognition sent to their employer or family mean a lot to them.

- Giving them cards on anniversaries with the organization
- Making telephone calls of thanks

### **Formal vs. Informal Recognition**

Investigate ways to give recognition regularly and frequently. Staff may think that volunteers want formal recognition, but volunteers do like the fact that they are helping, so a verbal “thank you” from staff goes a long way. Besides, too much formal recognition loses its value, and some volunteers may even feel that it is taking away from the program.

That said, there is still a time and place for both formal and informal recognition. The following list can give you ideas on where to start.

#### **Formal**

- Ceremony or program
- Program and meal
- Written recognition, letter
- Published recognition, newsletter
- Published recognition, newspaper
- Insignia showing years of service
- Insignia showing awards
- Certificates
- Awards
- Coffees, High Teas, Ice Cream Socials

#### **Informal**

- Seeking advice from the volunteer
- Having volunteer participate in focus groups or staff planning committees
- Praising them in public
- Offering new challenges
- Providing ongoing support
- Complimenting them when a task is well done



## Supervision

Volunteers need supervision to ensure that they are meeting your agency's needs. Supervision also provides a feeling of support and gives value to the work of the volunteer. Volunteers should know that they are accountable to a supervisor. Use the orientation, volunteer handbook, interview session, and/or training to talk about supervision. In large volunteer programs, it is common for the volunteer manager to serve as a human resource director for volunteers, rather than directly supervising the entire volunteer team. It therefore becomes important to work with your paid staff to take on daily supervision of volunteers in their departments.

### **Choosing Supervisors**

In most organizations, it is impossible for a volunteer manager to supervise every volunteer. Therefore, enlist other staff members to help. Here's a supervision checklist of things that should be in place before you get started:

- Supervisory roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and included in that person's job description.
- Upper management and mid-management understand the time and duties required and have given approval for their staff to be supervisors of volunteers in your program.
- Adequate time and resources are allocated for the supervisor to perform this role.
- There is a clear, well-defined, and effective process of communication among the volunteer program manager, all levels of management, supervisors of volunteers, and volunteers.
- The reporting hierarchy is clearly understood by all.

- There is a procedure in place if a supervisor can't be available for a volunteer.
- Supervisors are provided with training on how to supervise volunteers.
- Supervisors are rewarded for doing their jobs well.

When selecting supervisors, make sure they fully understand and agree to their job description. If you select a staff person, she will have a dual role — her original job and the additional role as volunteer supervisor. Therefore, you should put a plan in place that gives volunteers access to their supervisor without interfering with the supervisor's other duties.

Select supervisors with the following skills:

- Ability to solve problems and meet deadlines
- Excellent communication skills
- Dependability
- Interest in increasing their base of knowledge
- Ability to recognize and accept change
- Willingness and ability to follow procedures
- Ability to treat everyone fairly
- Good people skills, including patience, tact, and the ability to be firm

Don't forget that volunteers are often very passionate about the work that they do on behalf of your agency. Make sure they get a bit of relief or a feeling of support by encouraging supervisors to be responsive to their volunteer needs. When necessary, schedule breaks for volunteers so that they can get emotionally recharged. If they need a bigger recharge, suggest that they take a leave of absence.

## Causes of Conflict

Conflict is inherent in any organization. The goal is to identify the cause and effectively resolve the situation. In general, three areas of conflict tend to crop up at animal care and control agencies: animal related issues, policy related issues, and interpersonal relations.

To address these areas of conflict, be conversant in your agency's policies and be prepared to talk to volunteers who find they have a problem. You'll have a much easier time dealing with the situation appropriately and effectively. Determine how best to handle the conflict given the specific situation, and perhaps talk to other volunteer managers and human resource professionals on how they deal with conflict in the workplace.

Here are a few specific examples of conflict you might face.

### ***Animal-Related Issues***

#### **Euthanasia**

**Health:** Animals are euthanized for treatable but contagious illness, injuries, or illness (e.g., cancer), and their veterinary expense far exceeds the shelter's ability to pay.

**Temperament:** Animal does not pass the temperament test in the evaluation process or has exhibited aggressive behavior during their shelter experience.

**Individual animal vs. "big picture":** Volunteer's focus is on saving one animal, usually abused or injured, and loses sight of the thousands of animals sheltered annually. The volunteer will go to great lengths to save an animal in need of medical treatment versus the healthy animal in the next cage.

## Adoption

**Too lenient:** Volunteer feels staff is letting animals go into homes that are not "good enough."

**Too strict:** Volunteer feels that any home is better than euthanasia; accuses staff of denying an animal a second chance at life.

## Fostering

**Possible placement:** Volunteer wants to foster an animal that is not likely to be adopted easily when it is returned to the shelter.

**Relinquishing the animal:** The volunteer is reluctant to return the animal and becomes emotionally invested in the individual animal.

**Adoption:** The volunteer places unrealistic expectations on staff to process the foster animal for adoption. She wants to be personally responsible for finding a home for the animal, bypassing the shelter system all together.

**Medical protocol:** The volunteer does not comply with shelter's protocol for treating illness in foster animals and wishes to take the animal to her personal veterinarian or emergency hospital without prior authorization; or she allows interaction of foster animal with household pets compromising health of all animals involved.

## Animal Care vs. Animal Rights

Humane views and values vary greatly. Examples include individuals who are vegan or vegetarian, those whose primary interest are to care for dogs not cats, and those who are involved in organized protests. Staff and volunteers in the shelter often have difficulty coexisting when their

views, principles, and beliefs are different from those of the agency.

### ***Policy-Related Issues***

**The inherited volunteer:** The volunteer has been in the program longer than you have been managing it; she wants to continue doing things the same way rather than comply with changes.

**Challenging phrases:** “We’ve always done it this way;” “When I volunteered at \_\_\_\_\_ they handled it this way;” “I heard \_\_\_\_\_ does it this way; why can’t we?”

**Daily operations vs. weekly visit:** Volunteer does not understand or agree with daily operations and the need for certain policies. This may stem from limited exposure to the challenges faced.

### ***Interpersonal Relations***

**Territorial issues:** Staff feel threatened when volunteers are performing tasks in their area. Volunteers feel staff “shadows” them and does not trust they can perform their volunteer tasks.

**Education issues:** Volunteers feel superior to shelter staff due to additional education or economic differences.

**Internal politics:** Volunteers could be more vocal regarding internal politics between divisions, locations, or administration vs. direct care staff. Volunteers could feel they have more latitude since their income will not be affected by voicing opinions regarding operational issues.

**Balance of work:** Volunteer feels they pitch in more than staff and/or other volunteers. They find fault with staff and volunteers.

### ***Problem Solving***

If conflict arises with volunteers, get all sides of the story. Try to relate one of your own experiences to the situation to help validate the volunteer’s feelings when appropriate. If a volunteer acts inappropriately, respond to the situation immediately by holding a one-on-one meeting. Volunteers need clarity. Be fair. If one volunteer is disciplined for a particular incident, apply the same rules to other volunteers in the same situation. Never lose your cool.

Review the service description with the volunteer. Explain why it is written as it is and the consequences of it not being followed. Ask if the volunteer understands.

Perhaps the volunteer feels underutilized, and a solution would be to discuss other responsibilities. Maybe the volunteer has talents you could use for other volunteer functions. If the volunteer makes a suggestion, take it into consideration and have a way to share the idea with the appropriate people in management. Try to be positive and at the same time stick to the facts. Point out that there is a reason for agency practices and guidelines.

If the situation necessitates, have the volunteer repeat training. If a volunteer shows up late on a consistent basis, ask them to recommit to a schedule and explain why this is important. If it’s a volunteer who doesn’t call or show up at all, find out why. There’s nothing wrong with trying to get a volunteer back on track if they’ve shown great potential.

Some volunteers may not be able to continue volunteering, but aren’t sure how to communicate this to your agency. In this case, a pleasant departure can be

easily provided by taking time to make a phone call and talk to them.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Conflict resolution isn't easy, but it is possible. Remove the upset volunteer from contact with the public, other volunteers, and staff if necessary. Then, determine the cause of conflict. This will help you determine the course of action to resolve the problem. There are two sides to every story; be sure to get the facts before rushing to conclusions.

Some organizations have a written conflict resolution procedure. If this is the case be sure to include it in the volunteer handbook. A team effort will make it much easier to determine the course of action, so consult fellow managers about how to follow up with a volunteer.

Ask yourself these questions:

- How is your decision going to affect the rest of the volunteers in your program?
- If an animal is involved, how will the animal be affected, and what should be done about it?
- How will it affect staff? If the problem is not immediately addressed, it could affect staff morale as well as their attitude toward all volunteers.
- If the volunteer contacts the media, how will it affect your decision? Public perception can impact your agency, especially donations.

### **Ending Volunteer Service**

You've tried and tried, and there's nothing left but to release the volunteer from further responsibilities with your agency. Review the above process of addressing the conflict before you take any further action. Make sure you've given the volunteer an opportunity to correct the

behavior. Speak one-on-one, privately. Be clear the situation was a result of not following the service description and/or agency expectations. Be clear and make sure the volunteer understands that the relationship has ended. Never lose your cool. You may want to document interactions so you have a history to pass along to future volunteer managers.

Always avoid using employment language or written warning/termination memos. By doing so you imply employment. Employment laws don't apply to volunteers who donate their time to a nonprofit. Depending on the situation, you or the agency may even risk being sued by others if you keep a volunteer who is known to be a problem.

### **Exit Interviews**

Give all volunteers, regardless of why they leave, an exit interview. This, like record keeping, will help you understand any opportunities for improvements in your program. Although it is best to get comments in writing, an exit survey can be conducted by phone. Give the volunteer an opportunity to provide comments about their experience, information on why they left and if they would return to your agency to volunteer again, details on new skills developed, and ideas for any improvements.

You may receive feedback that gives you an opportunity to review guidelines, rules, service descriptions, manuals, and agreements. Are they clear, well defined, offered in a timely and effective manner to the volunteer? Could they be improved in any way to prevent the same situation from occurring again?

## **Stress Management**

While building and managing a volunteer program, it is important to remember to build in stress management, not only for the supervisors and volunteers but also for yourself. Everyone experiences stress; it's important to be aware of stress levels and to take positive steps to manage stress. Some basics for coping with stress include:

- Healthy diet and nutrition
- Physical activity and exercise
- Social support
- Effective communication and assertiveness
- Efficient time and financial management
- Problem solving
- Taking appropriate action to resolve challenges
- Letting go of things over which you have no control
- Maintaining a positive self image and self talk
- Humor

From time to time, take an opportunity to check on your stress level. Take action to manage stress before it causes problems with your physical or emotional health or your job performance.

As you plan and budget for your program, also plan and budget time for stress management. Both you and the program will benefit.



## Appendix 1: Recommended Resources

### Books

101 More Ideas for Volunteer Programs, Sue Vineyard, November 1995, ISBN: 091102946X

Building Staff/Volunteer Relations, Ivan H. Scheier, October 1993, ISBN: 0940576147

Count Me In! 501 Ideas on Recruiting Volunteers, Judy Esmond, Newseason Publications, 2001, ISBN 0-646-40894-1, Electronic version only

From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success, Susan J. Ellis, Alan S. Glazer, Jeffrey D. Kahn, 1986 (Revised edition, 1996), ISBN: 0940576171

Leadership and Management of Volunteer Programs: A Guide for Volunteer Administrators, James C. Fisher, Kathleen M. Cole, April 1993, ISBN: 1555425313

No Surprises: Controlling Risks in Volunteer Programs, Charles Tremper, Gwynne Kostin, August 1993, ISBN: 0963712004

The (Help!) I-Don't-Have-Enough-Time Guide to Volunteer Management, Katherine Noyes Campbell and Susan J. Ellis, November 5, 2002, ISBN: 0940576406

The Joy of Recognition, Lynnette Younggren, Debra Sikanas, 2000, ISBN 1-5617-000-5

The Volunteer Recruitment (and Membership Development) Book, Susan J.

Ellis, Energize, Inc; 3rd edition (January 1, 2002), ISBN: 0940576252

To Lead Is To Serve: How to Attract Volunteers & Keep Them, by Shar McBee, (July 2002), ISBN: 0963856022

Volunteers: How to Get Them, How to Keep Them, by Helen Little, (September 1, 1999) ISBN: 1928892019

Volunteers: The Organizational Behavior of Unpaid Workers, Jone L. Pearce, December 1993, ISBN: 0415094275

What We Learned (the Hard Way) about Supervising Volunteers: An Action Guide for Making Your Job Easier (Collective Wisdom Series), Jarene Frances Lee with Julia M. Catagnus, Energize, Inc; (December 1, 1998) , ISBN: 0940576201

### Organizations

Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action  
[www.arnova.org](http://www.arnova.org)

Association for Volunteer Administration (a local chapter may be in your area)  
[www.avaintl.org/index.html](http://www.avaintl.org/index.html)

Energize, Inc.  
[www.energizeinc.com](http://www.energizeinc.com)

Independent Sector  
[www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org)

Nonprofit Risk Management Center  
[www.nonprofitrisk.com](http://www.nonprofitrisk.com)

Points of Light  
[www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)

Society for Nonprofit Organizations  
[www.snpo.org](http://www.snpo.org)

Volunteer Management Associates  
[www.volunteermanagement.com](http://www.volunteermanagement.com)

VolunteerMatch  
[www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)

### ***Periodicals and Networking***

Charity Channel  
[www.charitychannel.com](http://www.charitychannel.com)

DOVIA (Directors of Volunteers in  
Agencies) Directory  
[www.energizeinc.com/prof/dovia.html](http://www.energizeinc.com/prof/dovia.html)

Grapevine Newsletter

Go to [www.energizeinc.com](http://www.energizeinc.com), click on  
Bookstore and search on the keyword  
“Grapevine”

Volunteer Management Report  
[www.stevensoninc.com/newsletters\\_vmr.htm](http://www.stevensoninc.com/newsletters_vmr.htm)

### ***Catalogs for Supplies***

Baudville  
[www.baudville.com/catalogs](http://www.baudville.com/catalogs)

Positive Promotions  
[www.positivepromotions.com](http://www.positivepromotions.com)



## Appendix 2: Sample Volunteer Profile

The No Name Humane Society of Smith County is a not-for-profit charitable organization funded primarily through donations. Our mission is the prevention of cruelty to animals and the education of current and potential pet owners about responsible ownership. We welcome the participation of those willing to represent our organization in accordance with our mission and philosophies.

Please complete the following form.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Nickname \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

(C) \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Are you:      14-17 years      18 years or older

How did you hear about No Name Humane Society? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you hope to gain from a volunteer experience at the Humane Society? \_\_\_\_\_

Education (circle last completed.):

High School — 1 2 3 4

College — 1 2 3 4

Graduate School — 1 2 3 4

Animal Experience:

\_\_\_ Veterinary Hospital

\_\_\_ Dog Grooming

\_\_\_ Cat Grooming

\_\_\_ Rabbit Grooming

\_\_\_ Horse Grooming

\_\_\_ Pet Sitting/Boarding

\_\_\_ Boarding Kennel

\_\_\_ Farm Animals

\_\_\_ Horses

\_\_\_ Animal Breeding

\_\_\_ Dog Obedience/Training

\_\_\_ Dog or Cat Shows

\_\_\_ Dog Agility Training

\_\_\_ Exotic Animals

\_\_\_ Emergency Services

\_\_\_ Wildlife rehabilitation

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Experience, Special Skills, Strengths, and Talents:

\_\_\_ Gardening

\_\_\_ Sales

\_\_\_ Farm Equipment

\_\_\_ Graphic Arts

\_\_\_ Clerical

\_\_\_ Painting

\_\_\_ Landscaping

\_\_\_ Supervision

\_\_\_ Carpentry

\_\_\_ Public Relations

- Web design
- Writing or editing articles for publication
- Photography
- Calligraphy
- Computers
- Crafts
- Writing

- Sewing
- Teaching
- Working with children
- Special events
- Marketing
- Fundraising/development
- Volunteer coordination

Please indicate any specialized equipment/resources you have available, firsthand experience working with animals or additional skills, languages or training:

---



---



---

Describe any present or past volunteer positions: \_\_\_\_\_

---



---

Are you currently employed? Yes No

If yes, what is your work schedule? \_\_\_\_\_

Employer's name and address \_\_\_\_\_

---

What kind of work do you do?

---

When are you available to volunteer?

WHEN AVAILABLE	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

(Circle one.) Every week    Every other week    Once a month    Special events

How much time can you commit?

\_\_\_ Hours per Week    or    \_\_\_ Hours per Month    or    \_\_\_ Unsure

Would you be willing to volunteer off the Humane Society premises? Yes No

Did you attend a Volunteer Orientation Meeting? Yes No When? \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of interest (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Adoption assistant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Obedience training
<input type="checkbox"/>	Animal care and comfort	<input type="checkbox"/>	Office support
<input type="checkbox"/>	Animal health care assistant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pet transport
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cat socialization	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pet-Assisted Therapy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dog walking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pocket pets
<input type="checkbox"/>	Foster care	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rabbits
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/>	Receptionist
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gardening	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reptiles
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grooming	<input type="checkbox"/>	Retail shop
<input type="checkbox"/>	Humane Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special events
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information Desk	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thrift store
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Relations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marketing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exotic Birds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wildlife

Additional areas of interest: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone 1 ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone 2 ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone 1 ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone 2 ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

References that are not family members (name and phone number)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

I, (name) \_\_\_\_\_ confirm that the information provided on this application is correct. I understand the commitment involved and acknowledge that my services are offered at my own risk. I agree to adhere to No Name Humane Society policies and carry out my duties as a Humane Society volunteer effectively.

I give my permission to No Name Humane Society to verify any of the information given.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteers 12-15 years of age

All volunteers ages 12-15 must be accompanied and supervised by a parent or guardian during each volunteer shift. The parent or guardian must attend all trainings and participate fully in the volunteer program.

Volunteers 16-17 years of age

All volunteers ages 16-17 must include one written recommendation (adult, non-relative) and have the signature of a parent or guardian. This requirement may be waived if the minor has successfully completed 6 months of volunteer service at No Name Humane Society prior to turning 16.

As a parent or guardian, I understand that my son/daughter volunteers at his/her own risk. I hereby grant permission for him/her to perform volunteer work for the No Name Humane Society.

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 3: Sample Volunteer Service Agreement**

*Adapted from a form written by The Toledo Humane Society, Maume, OH*

The No Name Humane Society of Smith County offers the following as a volunteer service agreement that the volunteer and volunteer program manager must sign and date.

As a volunteer at the No Name Humane Society, I agree to:

- Hold as absolutely confidential all information that I may obtain, directly or indirectly, concerning clients and staff. I agree not to seek to obtain confidential information from a client. I understand that an intentional or unintentional violation of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action, including termination by the No Name Humane Society and/or possible legal action by others (i.e., clients, customers).
- Be available to volunteer as indicated here by the volunteer program manager: (This should be individualized per agreement between the manager, supervisor and the volunteer. Examples: 3 hours per week for a minimum of 6 months or 4 hours each occasion during the first and third week of each month for 6 months).
- Become familiar with the organization's policies and procedures and uphold its philosophy and standards.
- Donate my services to the organization without contemplation of compensation, benefits, or future employment.
- Be punctual and conscientious, conduct myself with dignity, courtesy, and consideration for others, and endeavor to make my work professional in quality.
- Dress appropriately as outlined in my position description and maintain a well-groomed appearance for my volunteer assignments.
- Attend orientation and in-service trainings as scheduled.
- Carry out my assignments and seek assistance from my volunteer position supervisor when necessary.
- Take any volunteer position-related problems, concerns, or suggestions to my supervisor or the volunteer program manager.
- Adhere to the department's sign-in procedures.
- Notify the volunteer program manager or my supervisor if I'm unable to work as scheduled
- Notify the volunteer program manager when I choose to discontinue my volunteer service at the Humane Society.
- Allow my picture and name to be used for public relations and educational purposes in materials such as, but not limited to, newsletters, brochures, newspaper articles, educational videotapes, and website.

I understand that the volunteer service department reserves the right to terminate my volunteer status as a result of any of the following:

- Failure to comply with organizational policies, rules and other regulations
- Absences without prior notification
- Unsatisfactory attitude, work, or appearance.

- Any other circumstances which, in the judgment of the volunteer program manager and/or supervisor, would make my continued service as a volunteer contrary to the best interest of myself or the No Name Humane Society.

I understand that handling animals and other volunteer activities may place me in situations that could result in injury to me or my personal property. On behalf of myself, my heirs, personal representatives and assigns, I hereby release, discharge, indemnify and hold harmless the No Name Humane Society and its directors, officers, employees and agents from any and all claims, causes of action and demands of any nature, whether known or unknown, arising out of or in connection with any volunteer activities on behalf of the Humane Society.

I have read and understand each of the above conditions and my signature below indicates that I agree to be bound by them.

---

Volunteer Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

Volunteer Program Manager Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 4: Sample Youth Volunteer Release Form**

*Adapted from a form written by The Humane Society of the Boulder Valley, Boulder, CO*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree that if I am accepted as a volunteer for the No Name Humane Society (the “Society”), I agree to comply with all of the rules and regulations which may be established from time to time by the Society. I understand that failure to comply with the rules and regulations of the Society may result in termination of my volunteer service.

I understand and agree that if accepted as a volunteer, all services performed by me will be performed on a strictly voluntary basis, and that I will receive no remuneration, pay or compensation of any kind, that I will not be an employee of the Society nor otherwise derive any benefits normally available to employees of the Society, and that the Society shall incur no liability of any nature as a result of my volunteering for the Society.

I acknowledge that in handling animals and performing other volunteer tasks there exists a risk of injury including physical harm or death, and that all services performed by me will be done at my own risk. Therefore, on behalf of myself, my heirs, and personal representatives, I hereby release, discharge, indemnify and hold harmless the Society and its assigns, successors, agents, staff, officers, board of directors, employees, contractors, and representatives from any and all claims, causes of action, or demands of any nature or cause whatsoever, including costs and attorney fees, arising out of or relating to my volunteering with the Society, including, but not limited to, animal bites, accidents, or injuries.

I understand that public relations are an important part of volunteering with the Society. On behalf of myself, my heirs and personal representatives, if accepted as a volunteer, I give the Society permission to use and publish photographs taken of me as a volunteer for use in its public relations efforts.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 5: Sample Youth Volunteer Release Form

*Adapted from a form written by The Humane Society of the Boulder Valley, Boulder, CO*

### Parental Consent

(Only to be completed if the Volunteer is under the age of eighteen (18))

I, \_\_\_\_\_, represent that I am the parent or legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, a minor, (the "Volunteer"), and by my signature below consent to and allow my son/daughter/ward to perform volunteer services for the No Name Humane Society (the "Society") under the terms and conditions as set forth in Section I (see Appendix 4), above, for volunteers. In addition, I give the Society permission to use and publish photographs of my son/daughter/ward, the Volunteer, as part of its public relations efforts.

On behalf of myself and the Volunteer, and our heirs and personal representatives, I hereby release, discharge, indemnify and hold harmless the Society and its assigns, successors, agents, staff, officers, board of directors, employees, contractors, and representatives, from any and all claims, causes of action, or demands of any nature or cause whatsoever, including costs and attorney fees, arising out of or in relation to the Volunteer's volunteer service with the Society, including, but not limited to, animal bites, accidents, or injuries.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 6: Sample Reference Check Questions

*Adapted from a form written by the Harrison Memorial Animal Hospital*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Are you familiar with No Name Humane Society?

\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_ NO

If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you known the applicant? \_\_\_\_\_

In what capacity have you known the applicant? \_\_\_\_\_

How competent is the applicant? (Dependable? Takes initiative?) \_\_\_\_\_

Working as a volunteer at No Name Humane Society will involve contact with people from highly diverse populations. How would you rate this applicant on relationships with other people?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please describe any reservations you have or potential weaknesses you see in this applicant.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Overall recommendation:

\_\_\_ Recommend without reservation

\_\_\_ On the whole, would recommend

\_\_\_ Have some reservations, but feel applicant has reasonable chance of success

\_\_\_ Substantial doubts

\_\_\_ Major concerns

## **Appendix 7: Sample Interview Questions**

*Adapted from a form written by The Dumb Friends League, Denver, CO*

- What is your previous experience (or knowledge) of the No Name Humane Society?
- What was something new you learned at orientation?
- How do you feel about the fact that we stress spaying and neutering so strongly?
- How do you feel about the fact that we euthanize animals here at No Name Humane Society?
- What do you anticipate you would like most about volunteering here?
- What are your skills (or strong points) that would benefit the No Name Humane Society?
- What do you anticipate might be difficult for you in your volunteer work here?
- Do you prefer to work alone (independently) or with others?
- Tell me about previous supervision you've had in either volunteer or work experiences.
- What type of supervision do you prefer?

## **Appendix 8: Sample Service Description**

### ***Adoption Assistant***

Volunteer Service Description

**Goal:** To assist Adoption Associates and Adoption Counselors to facilitate the placement of shelter animals in homes.

**Reports to:** Senior Adoption Counselor

#### **Qualifications:**

- Ability to communicate verbally and in writing in English, some knowledge of Spanish or Japanese is helpful
- Basic understanding of dog and cat behavior
- The ability to lead dogs and carry small dogs or puppies, cats and other small animals safely. (Must be able to lift and carry 30 pounds).

**Time Commitment:** 3 hours every other week; plus two hours every other month for ongoing training and/or volunteer/staff meetings.

**Responsibilities:** Participate in animal placement by generating descriptive kennel cards for new animals; complete adoption paperwork; check wait lists to see if incoming animals meet existing requests; place phone calls; update animal and adoption paperwork and database; bring animals to or from their housing area to the visiting room or clinic; other duties as requested by Adoption Associates and Adoption Counselors.

**Location:** No Name Humane Society, 121 East Main St., Nowhere City, CA 12345  
818-555-1111

**Training Required:** Volunteer Orientation (4 hours), Volunteer Training (6 hours), Handling Animals Safely (4 hours); on-the-job training (ongoing). The volunteer must also read “The Weekend Dog” and “Cat Alone” by the end of the sixth week from start date. (These books are available on loan from the Volunteer Manager’s office.) Additional training may be offered or required.

**Guidelines:** Volunteer must uphold all guidelines and policies as outlined in the No Name Shelter Volunteer Manual, Adoption Guidelines Handbook and Animal Handling Handbook. These resource materials are provided and explained during training.

## Appendix 9: Sample Exit Questionnaire Form

*Adapted from a form written by The Humane Society of the Boulder Valley, Boulder, CO*

Dear Friend of No Name Humane Society,

I want to sincerely thank you for the contribution of time you gave to our organization. Your efforts benefited the animals and community we serve in many positive ways. You can impact our services further by taking a moment to complete this survey on your volunteer experience. Our intent is for you to have an opportunity to tell us about your experience so we can evaluate how we are doing and how we can improve. We assure you that your answers will be kept confidential. Please take a few minutes to fill out this form and return to:

NAME, Volunteer Manager  
No Name Humane Society  
Address

Volunteer name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Start date: \_\_\_\_\_ End date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer position(s) held: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of immediate supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions:

What prompted you to become a volunteer?

What did you like best about your volunteer experience?

What did you like least about your volunteer experience?

Do you feel your presence and contributions were valued?

How could we have done better in acknowledging your accomplishments?

How did the initial position description match with the actual volunteer experience?

Was training sufficient?

What additional training would have been helpful to you?

Why have you chosen to discontinue your participation in our volunteer program?

What additional recommendations or suggestions do you have for our program?

Would you consider returning to volunteer with No Name Humane Society at a later time?

Do you wish to remain on the volunteer or organizational mailing lists?